

Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY;—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

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MISCELLANEOUS.

SAN FRANCISCO.

By Day and Night.

A better idea of San Francisco, in the beginning of September, 1849, cannot be given than by the description of a single day. Supposing the visitor to have been long enough in the place to sleep on a hard plank and in spite of the attacks of innumerable fleas, he will be awakened at daylight by the noises of building, with which the hills are all alive. The air is temperate, and the invariable morning fog is just beginning to gather. By sunrise, which gleams hazily over the Coast Mountains across the Bay, the whole populace is up and at work. The wooden buildings unlock their doors, the canvas houses and tents throw back their front curtains; the lighters on the water are warped out from ship to ship; carts and porters are busy along the beach; and only the gaming-tables, thronged all night by the votaries of chance, are idle and deserted. The temperature is so fresh as to inspire an active habit of body, and even without the stimulus of trade and speculation there would be few sluggards at this season.

As early as half past six the bells begin to sound to breakfast, and for an hour thenceforth, their incessant clang and the braying of immense gongs drown all the hammers that are busy on a hundred roofs. The hotels, restaurants and refectories of all kinds are already as numerous as gaming-tables, and equally various in kind. The tables d'hôte of the first class, (which charge \$2 and upwards the meal,) are abundantly supplied. There are others, with more simple and solid fare, frequented by the large class who have their fortunes yet to make.

By nine o'clock the town is in the full flow of business. The streets running down to the water, and Montgomery street which fronts the Bay, are crowded with people, all in hurried motion. The variety of characters and costumes is remarkable. Our own countrymen seem to lose their local peculiarities in such a crowd, and it is by the chance epithets rather than manner, that the New Yorker is distinguished from the Kentucian, the Carolinian from the Down-Easter, the Virginian from the Texan. The German and Frenchman are more easily recognised. Peruvians and Chilians go by in their brown ponchos, and the sober Chinese, cool and impassive in the midst of excitement, look out of the oblique corners of their long eyes at the bustle, but are never tempted to venture from their own line of business. The eastern side of the plaza, in front of the Parker House and canvas hell called the Eldorado, are the general rendezvous of business and amusement—combining change, park, club-room and promenade all in one. There, everybody not constantly engaged in one spot, may be seen at some time of the day. The character of the groups scattered along the plaza is oftentimes very interesting. In one place are three or four speculators bargaining for lots, buying and selling "fifty varas square" in towns, some of which are canvas and some only paper; in another a company of miners, brown as leather, and as rugged in features as in dress; in a third perhaps, three or four naval officers, speculating on next cruise, or a knot of general gamblers, talking the over last night's operations.

The day advances. The mist which after sunrise hung low and heavy for an hour or two, has risen above the hills, and there will be two hours of pleasant sunshine before the wind sets in from the sea. The crowd in the streets is now wholly alive. Men dart hither and thither, as if possessed with an never resting spirit.—You speak to an acquaintance a merchant perhaps. He utters a few hurried words of greeting, while his eyes send keen glances on all sides of you; suddenly he catches sight of somebody in a crowd; he is off, and in the next five minutes has bought up half a cargo, sold a town lot at treble the sum he gave, and taken a share in some new and imposing speculation. It is impossible to witness this excess and dissipation of business without feeling something of its influence. The very air is pregnant with magnetism of bold spirited, unwearied action, and he who ventures into the outer circle of the whirlpool, is spinning, ere he has time for thought, in its dizzy vortex.

But see! the groups in the plaza suddenly scatter; the city surveyor jerks his pole out of the ground and leaps on a pile of boards; the vendors of cakes and sweetmeats follow his example, and the place is cleared just as the wild bull which has been racing down Kearney street makes his appearance. Two vanqueros, shouting and swinging their lariats, follow at a hot gallop; the dust flies as they dash across the plaza. One of them, in mid-career, hurls his lariat in the air. Mark how deftly the coil unwinds in its flying

curve, and with what precision the noose falls over the bull's horns! The horse wheels as if on a pivot, and shoots off in an opposite line. He knows the length of the lariat to a hair and the instant it is drawn taut, plants his feet firmly for the shock and throws his body forward. The bull is "brought up" with such force as to throw him off his legs. He lies stunned a moment, and then, rising heavily, makes another charge. But by this time the second vanquero has thrown a lariat around one of his hind legs, and thus checked on both sides, he is dragged off to slaughter. The plaza is refilled as quickly as it was emptied, and the course of business is resumed. About twelve o'clock a wind begins to blow from the northwest sweeping with most violence through a gap between the hills, opening towards the Golden Gate. The bells and gongs begin to sound for dinner, and these two causes tend to lessen the crowd in the streets for an hour or two. Two o'clock is the usual dinner-time for business men, but some of the old and successful merchants have adopted the fashionable hour of five.—Where shall we dine to-day? the restaurants display their signs invitingly on all sides; we have choice of the United States (Tontoni's), the Alhambra, and many other equally classic resorts, but Delmonico's, like its distinguished original in New York has the highest prices and the greatest variety of dishes. We go down Kearney street to a two story wooden house in the corner of Jackson. The lower story is a market; the walls are garnished with quarters of beef and mutton; a huge pile of Sandwich Island squashes fills one corner and several cabbage-heads, valued at \$2 each, show themselves in the window.—We enter a little door at the end of the building, ascend a dark narrow flight of steps and find ourselves in a long low room, with ceiling and walls of whitewash and a floor covered with oil cloth.—With but moderate appetite, the dinner will cost me \$5, if he is at all epicurian in his tastes. There are cries of "steward!" from all parts of the room—the word "waiter" is not considered sufficiently respectful, seeing that the waiter may have been a lawyer or merchant's clerk a few months before. The dishes look very small as they are placed on the table, but they are skilfully cooked and very palatable to men that have ridden in from the diggings. The appetite one acquires in California is something remarkable. For two months after my arrival, my sensations were like those of a famished wolf.

In the matter of dining the tastes of all nations can be gratified here. There are French restaurants on the plaza and on Dupont street; an extensive German establishment on Pacific street; the *Fonda Peruana*; the Italian Confectionary; and three Chinese houses, denoted by their long three-cornered flags of yellow silk. The latter are much frequented by Americans on account of their excellent cookery and the fact that meals are \$1 each, without regard to quantity. Kong-Sung's house is near the water; Whang-Tong's in Sacramento street, and Tong-Ling's in Jackson street. There the grave Celestials serve up their chow-chow and curry besides many genuine English dishes; their tea and coffee cannot be surpassed.

The afternoon is less noisy and active than the forenoon. Merchants keep within doors, and the gambling rooms are crowded with persons who step in to escape the wind and dust. The sky takes a cold grey cast, and the hills over the bay are barely visible in the dense, dusty air. Now and then a watcher, who has been stationed on the hill above Fort Montgomery, comes down and reports an inward bound vessel, which occasions a little excitement among the boatmen and the merchants who are awaiting consignments. Towards sunset, the plaza is nearly deserted; the wind is merciless in its force, and a heavy overcoat is not found unpleasantly warm. As it grows dark, there is a lull, though occasional gusts blow down the hill and carry the dust of the city over among the shipping.

The appearance of San Francisco at night, from the water is unlike anything I ever beheld. The houses are mostly of canvas, which is made transparent by the lamps within, and transforms them in the darkness, to dwellings of solid light.—Seated on the slopes of its three hills, the tents pitched among the chaparral to the very summits, it gleams like an amphitheatre of fire. Here and there shine out brilliant points, from the decoy-lamps of the gaming houses; and through the indistinct murmur of the streets comes by fits, the sound of music from their hot and crowded precincts. The picture has something in it unreal and fantastic; it impresses one like the cities of the magic lantern, which a motion of the hand can build or annihilate.

The only objects left for us to visit are the gaming-tables, whose day has just fairly dawned. We need not wander far

in search of one. Denison's Exchange, the Parker House, and Eldorado, stand side by side; across the way are the Verandah and Agulha de Oro; higher up the plaza the St. Charles and Bella Union; while dozens of second rate establishments are scattered through the less frequented streets. The greatest crowd is about the Eldorado; we find it difficult to effect an entrance. There are about eight tables in the room, all of which are thronged; copper-hued Kanakas rolled in their sarapes and Peruvians thrust through their ponchos, stand shoulder to shoulder with the brown and bearded American miners. The stakes are generally small, though when the bettor gets into "a streak of luck" as it is called, they are allowed to double until all is lost or the bank breaks. Along the end of the room is a spacious bar, supplied with bad liquors, and in a sort of gallery suspended under the ceiling a female violinist tasks her talent and strength of muscle to minister to the excitement of the play.

The Verandah, opposite, is smaller, but boasts an equal attraction in a musician who has a set of Pandean pipes fastened at his chin, a drum on his back, which he beats with sticks at his elbows, and cymbals. The piles of coin on the monte tables clink merrily to his playing, and the throng of spectators, jammed together in a sweltering mass, walk up to the bar between the tunes and drink out of sympathy with his dry and breathless throat. At the Agulha de Oro there is a full band of Ethiopian serenaders, and at the other hells violins, guitars or wheezy accordions, as the case may be. The atmosphere of these places is rank with tobacco-smoke, and filled with a feverish, stifling heat, which communicates an unhealthy glow to the faces of the players.

We shall not be deterred from entering by the heat or smoke, or the motley characters into whose company we shall be thrown. There are rare chances here for seeing human nature in one of its dark and exciting places. Note the variety of expression in the faces gathered around this table! They are playing monte, the favorite game in California, since the chances are considered more equal and the opportunity of false play very slight. The dealer throws out his cards, with a cool, nonchalant air; indeed, the gradual increase of the hollow square of dollars at his left hand is not calculated to disturb his equanimity. The two Mexicans in front, muffled in their sarapes, put down their half-dollars and dollars and see them lost without changing a muscle. Gambling is a born habit with them, and they would lose thousands with the same indifference. Very different is the demeanor of the Americans who are playing; their good or ill luck is betrayed at once by involuntary exclamations and changes of countenance, unless the stake should be very large and absorbing, when their anxiety, though silent, may be read with no less certainty. They have no power to resist the fascination of the game.—Now counting their winnings by thousands, now dependant on the kindness of a friend for a few dollars to commence anew, they pass hour after hour in those hot, unwholesome dens. There is no appearance of arms, but let one of the players, impatient with his losses, and maddened by the poisonous fluids he has drunk, threaten one of the profession, and there will be no scarcity of knives and revolvers.

There are other places, where gaming is carried on privately and to a more ruinous extent—rooms in the rear of the Parker House, in the City Hotel and other places, frequented only by the initiated. Here the stakes are almost unlimited, the players being men of wealth and apparent respectability. Frequently, in the absorbing interest of some desperate game, the night goes by unheeded and morning breaks upon haggard faces and reckless hearts. Here are lost in a few turns of a card or rolls of a ball, the product of fortunate ventures by sea or months of racking labor on land. How many men, maddened by continual losses, might exclaim in their blind vehemence of passion, on leaving these nells:

"Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power;
Break all the spears and felleces from her wheel
And bow the round nave down the hill of
heaven,
As low as to the fiends!"

Bayard Taylor.

¶ We find in the Springfield Portfolio a touch of weather transcendentalism which, obviates the necessity of our saying anything further on the subject. It suits this season remarkably well.

"May coquetish, sometimes pettish,
Smiling often through her tears; in rotation
yields her station, and the welcome
June appears. Gentle, smiling, care-be-
guling, with a rose bud in her hair—April
foolish, May is coolish,—June warm
hearted is and fair."

Mr. Sampson's House;

—OR—

THE MISTAKE OF A TRAVELLER.

"Once upon a time," a queer old fellow named Smith started from a Southern city upon a pedestrian excursion of about one hundred miles. He was not such a very old fellow, either; he was about forty years older than when he was born. This Mr. Smith (he was not connected with the John Smith family in the most remote degree,) was a man of many peculiarities. If absolute stupidity did not form a prominent trait in his character, it was a quality which very much resembled stupidity, and might very easily be mistaken for it, by at least one half the world. He had manifested a singular abstraction, generally described as absence of mind, and would frequently roam about the streets an entire day without recognizing one of his numerous friends—apparently without being aware of the nature of his movements. This was Mr. Smith.

We were saying that Mr. Smith started upon a journey on the "ten toed machine" spoken of in John Bull. After travelling a few miles our pedestrian felt somewhat thirsty, and called at a small establishment which looked as though it was about half a tavern, for a drink.

A good natured young fellow waited upon him—brought him brandy and water—and in addition, furnished him with a bit of bread and cheese. All this was decidedly welcome and refreshing. When Mr. Smith had quenched his thirst and satisfied the slight craving of appetite, he re-commenced his travels, and, as he left the city tolerably early in the morning, he thought he might walk two or three hours longer, before he stopped for dinner.

His road seemed to be very level, and was skirted on one side by an uncommonly high fence. On he footed it for about three hours longer, until a glance at the position of the sun satisfied him he had better procure his noon-day meal. He called at a small dwelling by the road side, and the following dialogue ensued between him and a boy standing in the doorway:

"Who lives here, my son?"
"Mr. Sampson, sir."
"Do you keep a tavern?"
"Why, sorter, and sorter not—we accommodate people sometimes."
"Can I get dinner here?"
"Yes, sir—walk in."

Our traveller walked in, and in the course of half an hour a nice comfortable dinner, smoking hot, was set before him. He ate, drank, paid his moderate bill, put on his hat, took his walking stick and proceeded upon his journey.

Before he renewed his labors, however he took the precaution to fill his pipe carefully and then lit it. Fresh and vigorous as ever, he then pushed ahead; but as the sun crept down the horizon, Mr. Smith began to feel some degree of weariness stealing over him; still he persevered until it was quite dark. Finding himself opposite to a small house by the road side, he enquired of the youth seated upon the threshold:

"Who lives here, my son?"
"Mr. Sampson, sir."
"Can I get supper and lodging here to night by paying for it?"
"Certainly, sir—walk in."

Mr. Smith crossed the threshold, laid aside his hat and cane, drank a cup of tea, and ate two or three slices of toast, read four chapters in "Fox's Book of Martyrs," which he found upon the mantelpiece, and went to bed. When he awoke in the morning, the sun was just showing its broad red disc above the tree tops. He found the breakfast upon the table waiting for him. He finished the morning meal, and commenced his travels the second day. One thing simply attracted his attention—the road was exceedingly uniform—but the fact excited no surprise. At noon he called at a snug little house, and asked the lad who was gazing out of a window:

"Who lives here, my son?"
"Mr. Sampson, sir."
Our traveller paused a moment, reflected, and seemed to be conning over some name or circumstance in his mind—at last he said:

"Are there many of the name of Sampson on this road, my son?"
"A good many," said the boy.
"I thought so. Can you give me dinner here, my son?"
"Certainly, sir—walk in."

Mr. Smith stepped in, swallowed his dinner, and once more took the road. When night came on, he of course stopped at the first house on his way. A youth sat upon a wheelbarrow at the door whittling.

"Who lives here, my son?"
"Mr. Sampson! by Jupiter! I should think they were all Sampson's on this road. I got dinner at Mr. Sampson's yesterday, slept at another Mr. Sampson's last night, and here I am at Mr. Samp-

son's again to-night. Besides the houses I have seen upon this road all look alike—it's very queer."

"Very queer," replied the boy with a leer which seemed to say, "you cant fool me old fellow."

"Can you give me supper and lodging?" said the traveller.

"Certainly—walk in."
"I'm darned if this isn't a queer country," says the old man as he went to bed, "this looks exactly like the room I slept in last night; but I suppose it is all right."

It was full two o'clock the next day, when after travelling briskly at least six hours, Mr. Smith stopped at a comfortable small dwelling with the intention of securing his dinner. A boy stood in the door.

"How d'ye do?" said the boy.
"Nicely, my son. Who lives here?"
"Mr. Sampson. I've told you that half a dozen times already."
"The d—l you have. I haven't been here before have I?"

"I reckon you have—but ain't you travelling on a bet?"
"Travelling on a bet! no—what put that in your head?"

"Why you've been walking round the race course here for two days and a half, and I didn't suppose you were doing it for fun."

For the first time, now, Mr. Smith took a survey of things, and to his astonishment discovered that the boy had been telling the truth. He drew his hat over his forehead and started for home—determined never to enter upon a pedestrian excursion again.

RAILROAD TO THE PACIFIC.

The Report of the Congressional Committee, to whose province it has fallen to examine the separate plans proposed for linking more closely the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, will, no doubt, be perused with interest by our readers. It will be seen that WHITNEY'S plan, previously stamped by public approbation, and acquiesced in by State Legislatures, is, from the very outset of this Report, accorded an unqualified preference. WHITNEY'S plan is here affirmed to be the only plan completely matured, the only plan that runs free from constitutional objections and sectional difficulties, that escapes the liability of compelling hereafter enormous fiscal exactions, and that affords in its regulations and control no special advantages to any political party or stock corporation. When we add to this, that by one of the provisions of the bill accompanying this project, Mr. WHITNEY and his successors are placed under sufficient guaranties to complete the work—thus supplying the main additional requirement, we may consider its triumphant passage as almost certain; and, so, without charge of undue anticipation, or useless enthusiasm, dwell on certain advantages that must accrue, when the railroad, now no more than a project, becomes an actual verity. We confess that in realizing to ourselves the completed plan, we are most taken up with the Asiatic connection it will establish for us. We omit not indeed, in our prospective calculations, the cities, the villages, the tracts of cultured land—ever lengthening and widening,—that are to spring along that gigantic line of railroad; neither the effect of this new chain of social interest, in cementing everlastingly the bond of national union. But as whatever in these United States is to be achieved, can in the abstract only be an extension of present prosperity and present power—as on no one spot along the projected line will the history of civilization have to begin anew, we may be pardoned for dwelling in language more ardent than other results can command, on the Asiatic connection it will bring about. From the moment this great artery of commerce reaches to the Pacific, Asia will have to date her grandest era. The contact this ready means of intercommunication will afford, must excite in her people, strange and diverse as they are, new and insatiable desires that by their requirements on unremitting energy and activity, must effectually break up their present slumberous state. A period comparatively short will effect this. The estimate of future progress has little or nothing to do with the lazy gait of the past. The distance in time and space hitherto separating Asia from Europe—the experienced imbecility of the European Colonies that have held precarious tenure of her best maritime portions and finest inland regions—the few vessels that have visited her ports and pursued the windings of her navigable rivers—as compared with the countless merchant fleets destined to set forth from our Pacific boundary: all this, added to the incomplete knowledge now existing of her resources, her people, and her languages, has not tended to inspire with commercial enterprise, or to remove from her those jealousies and suspicions, which, even had this spirit been

awakened, would be sufficient to drive her back into her ancient languor. Not only inflicted by intestine wars, and by the rapine and cruelty of petty tyrants, who, like the Moghul Emperors, have sought to reign rather than to govern, the Christian mercenaries who have visited her shores for trade, and drawn their riches from her bosom, have lifted up the sword against her, and made war with the fragments of her ancient governments, without purposing to substitute, or in their desire for military power, capable of substituting, any possible benefits. Now, from the moment this, our connection with Asia, is consummated, European tyranny and domination, in whatever form there exhibited, will receive a lasting check, and British power in India commence its swift decay. That power, on which the commerce with India, has so long depended, is purely a military power; it possesses nothing vital; and the day when it is annihilated will be a happy one for the silk and nerveless people, over whom, with great show and barbaric pomp, it has flourished and held sway.

But let not the future chronicler omit to note, and to note distinctly, the condition of Asia at the period she is first brought near to us; and to note also how little she has yet received, after her long connection with other nations, of intelligence, or enterprise, or power. It is to us and to the spirit we shall awaken in herself, that Asia is to owe all these; it is from our shores that the genius of trade, who is to make as one those severed countries, must go forth. Let Europe boast of its power to civilize, to christianize, to vitalize; after all its doings, Asia, with her regions of unequalled beauty and fertility, spreading out beneath every zone, lies prostrate: accumulating no wealth, experiencing no progress,—while over Lucknor and Delhi, over the wide extent of Tartary, throughout Central Asia, and on to the feet of the Caucasus, where our race had its being, yet waves the green flag of the Prophet. The destinies of Asia are to be placed in our control; and in imbuing it with fresh intelligence, and giving it the quickenings of commercial life, we shall become immeasurably the gainers—gainers not by military aggrandizement, or in political influence, whereby to sweep away, or to build up, already tottering dynasties, but by the vigor of a sound commercial policy which shall encourage reciprocity to the utmost. On the part of Asia, it will have transferred to it, without violence, our government and our laws, and have introduced into its almost paradisaical regions, tens of thousands of Americans, who shall teach it new wonders, and spur it on with new alacrity. On our own part, we may expect to receive

—Embassies from
The Asian kings, and Parthian amongst these,
From India, and the golden Chersonese,
And almost Indian Isles."

Most likely we shall discover that Britain has by no means drained the gold of the Indies—only that her impolicy, by awakening suspicion has hid for a time the places of supply; and amongst the sterile rocks and mountains of Thibet, we run a chance of trapping more than wild fowl and musk antelopes. Hindostan will certainly yield us enlarged supplies of her silks, aromatics, and spices. From the gay, polite and hospitable Persian, we shall learn to understand better the spirit of the Orient, and to assimilate ourselves to Eastern modes of thought and expression. The nimble Arab will bestir himself to forward to our mart, satins, carpets and camlets. China shall place herself under our protection, and her language and her people be together better understood. Turkey, indolent Turkey, where once the arts with all their comforts abounded, unable to resist the general impulse, shall out of her own fertile soil redeem herself. And even those huge Russian caravans that yearly wend their way to China, called on, as they will be, for supplies for shipment, must needs be multiplied.

The trade of Europe with Asia is estimated at \$300,000,000; that of this country with Asia at \$13,000,000, per annum. The time now occupied in reaching a Chinese port from Europe, is 137 days; by WHITNEY'S Railroad the 137 days are curtailed to 37. When this Railroad becomes an actual verity, how quickly will the relative proportionate value of the European and American trade with Asia be reversed; and yet, at the same time, how largely will both be increased!

Then, with its ships crowding the Indian Ocean, with Europe and Asia meeting together in its embrace, with the commerce of the world traversing its bosom, with the mart of the world stationed in its midst, this country, it is to be hoped, will experience no need of "triumphal arches," and "monumentalobelisks."

Be modest; but be careful to distinguish between it and bashfulness.